



Senator Eide's Week in Review
February 7-11

In the Spotlight: Get Involved in Government

There are many ways for students and families from the 30th District to get involved in state government. Understanding the political process is crucial to making informed decisions about a variety of issues. The Washington State Legislature has a very well established page program. Each year, students between the ages of 14 and 16 have the opportunity to experience firsthand the legislative process and observe other branches of state government in action. I sponsor pages each session, so if you or someone you know is interested in applying for the page program please [click here](#) for more information.



Senate Pages in front of the Legislative Building

Get Involved in Government

One Million Signature Campaign

WA State Budget Update

3 Misconceptions about the Budget

This Week's Visitors

Contact Information:

Olympia Office:
305 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0430

Phone: (360) 786-7658

Toll-free legislative hotline:
1-800-562-6000

TTY/TDD Hearing impaired

Every year, I am also honored to have a college intern as a member of my staff. Juniors and seniors from colleges and universities from across the state apply to spend a semester or quarter in Olympia to work in member offices; track bills, assist with correspondence and perform research. Applications for this competitive program are due each fall. For more information please [click here](#).

Washington State is blessed with a beautiful Capitol Campus, rich with history and character. If you are interested in visiting the Capitol, guided tours are available daily and are a great way to experience the legislature. Please visit www.ga.wa.gov/visitor for additional information, directions and assistance in planning a visit to Olympia.

hotline: 1-800-635-9993

E-mail:

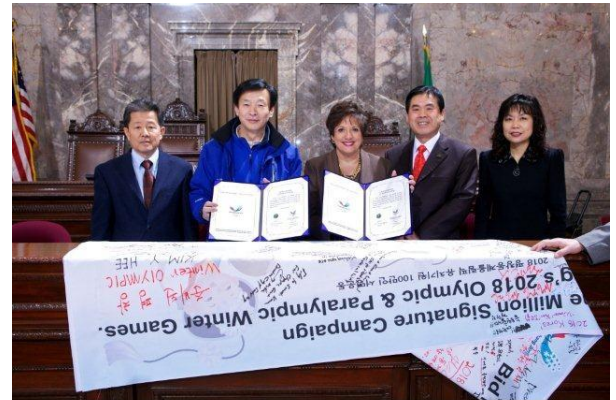
tracey.eide@leg.wa.gov

Web site:

<http://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/eide>

Senator Eide Signs One Million Signature Campaign

On Friday, February 4, Senator Eide met with Mr. Chung Wook Chang, Vice President of the One Million Signature Campaign to support a bid for Pyeong Chang, South Korea to host the 2018 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. The campaign banner arrived in North America last week and will be available when the International Olympic Committee visits Pyeong Chang later this month. The IOC will announce the location of the 2018 Olympics this summer. Federal Way Councilman Mike Park, Han Bom Lee, and Hee Jung Lee accompanied the banner.



Senator Eide with Federal Way Councilman Mike Park, Han Bom Lee, Hee Jung Lee, and Chung Wook Chang after signing the One Million Signature Campaign

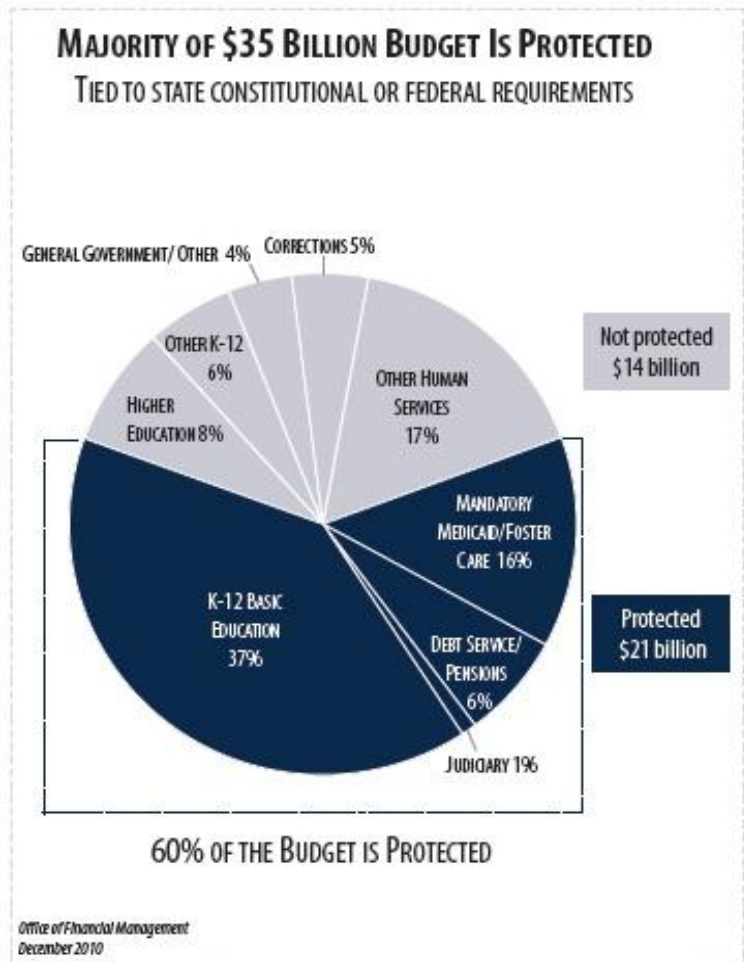
Senator Eide's Washington State Budget Update:

This year, legislators are faced with the difficult task of crafting the state budget for the 2011-13 biennium. In the last two years the Governor and the legislature have cut \$12 billion from the state budget—and this year it looks like we will have to cut \$5 billion more.

Last session the legislature passed a limited tax package of \$761 million to fund critical education, health care and social service programs. Last year, I voted for this revenue package because I am a strong supporter of our schools, ensuring children and families have access to health care as well as helping those in great need. Last November, Washington and 30th District voters overwhelmingly passed Initiative 1107 (two out of every three voters) and in doing so eliminated the \$761 million that funded so many needed programs. Voters state-wide and in the 30th District also passed Initiative 1053 that requires a two-thirds majority to close tax loopholes or increase revenue. I have heard and received your message loud and clear.

As the economic recession continues, the legislature is facing yet another shortfall: \$5 billion. Of Washington's \$35 billion budget, 60% is protected by Constitutional or federal requirements. That means we have \$14 billion from which we must cut \$5 billion. This area is made up of human services such as health care and job training, corrections and prisons, higher education and various critical K-12 programs. Governor Chris Gregoire has already released her budget proposal and the Senate and House of Representatives are hard at work crafting their own versions. This will undoubtedly be a long and painful process for everyone; the Senate will release its budget in mid-March.

I am deeply concerned that vital and valued services will be cut. Many of these are public services that I took office to protect—like public education, public safety and health care. But, we are faced with a stark reality and have few options to choose from. As the coming weeks unfold, I will be sure to stay in constant communication to keep you updated on our progress.



The 3 Major Misconceptions about how to Balance the Budget:

Above, I discussed some of the major challenges facing the legislature for balancing the 2011-2013 budget. This session, I've heard many major misconceptions about how lawmakers should go about tackling the problem. Each of the items listed below *will need to be part of the overall solution*. At the same time, *there is no one silver bullet that will prevent us all from being deeply affected* in one way or another by the solution the legislature ultimately takes.

FIRST: Eliminate waste, fraud and abuse. In a recent poll, 71 percent of the public said that our budget problem could be solved by cutting waste, fraud and abuse. The reality is, we could eliminate our entire public system of higher education -- all six of our public four-year institutions and all 34 two-year community and technical colleges -- and we wouldn't solve the current problem. We could eliminate our entire corrections system -- all nine prisons, three minimum custody camps, and fifteen work release centers -- and we wouldn't solve the current problem. We could eliminate all state environmental efforts -- all programs that promote clean air and water, clean up pollution, preserve and support our vast natural resources, protect endangered species and encourage conservation -- and we wouldn't solve the current problem. Most significantly, we

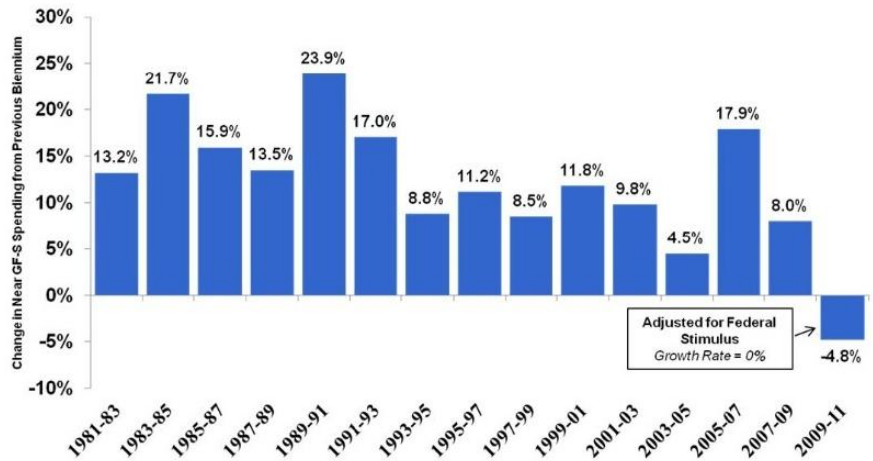
could do all of these things and it still wouldn't bring the budget into balance.

Yet – even still – it's imperative that the Legislature find major reforms in state government to maximize taxpayer dollars and to deliver essential services as efficiently as possible.

SECOND: Stop the overspending by the Legislature. While state spending in real dollars has grown over the past 10 years, we need to keep in mind that Washington's population has outpaced this growth over the past decade. Due to this growth, Washington was one of only eight states to add a Congressional seat after the 2010 census. The

accompanying graph shows the growth of state spending is actually at its lowest levels in 30 years. [This graph](#) shows how state spending is at its lowest point since the budget of 2003-05. Yet – even still – lawmakers will be working to make government even leaner this year.

Based on the enacted budget and even after adjusting for increased federal stimulus, the growth in near General Fund-State spending is at lowest levels in at least 30 years



THIRD: Cut back on state employees and their salaries. Public employees such as, our teachers, professors, corrections and law enforcement officers and many others, aren't responsible for our budget situation, or for the recession that got us to this point. The myth of "the overpaid state employee" is just that -- a myth. A recent national study by a renowned Rutgers professor found that, when education and experience and other factors are controlled for, state workers are compensated 7.6 percent less than they would be performing similar work in the private sector. The fact is, we could require every state worker to take a one-hundred percent pay cut and we'd still be a billion dollars in the hole. We could fire every single state employee and zero out their benefits, and we still have a budget problem. Yet – even still – public employees will be asked once again to be a part of the solution by sacrificing more than their fair share in this time of ongoing crisis.

IN CONCLUSION: There's no one answer that can solve our problem alone. In order to bring our budget into balance, lawmakers will have to pursue these solutions – plus countless others that carry a much larger social impact. As legislators come to terms with our budget crisis, it's important for the public to realize that the decisions we make this year will affect us all for many years to come. Our discussion with the public needs to be about the decisions we face over the coming months, but also about who and what we want to be as a state today, tomorrow, twenty years from now and beyond. In short, we need to talk not just about how much these public services cost, but also how much it costs to lose them.

This Week's Visitors from the 30th District:

If you are ever in Olympia and are from the 30th District, please visit my office: Legislative Building 305. I would love to see you!

*Federal Way Councilman Mike Park; Chung Wook Chang, Vice President of the One Million Signature

Campaign; Han Bom Lee, President of NW Gangwon Provincial Fellowship; Hee Jung Lee, President of Federal Way Korean American Parents Association

*Macaria Madrid, Arsenia Medina, James Reece, Consuelo Perez, Gong-Ju Park; SEIU 775 NW

*Lisa Waisath

*April Golenor; Puget Sound Health Partners

*Carl Hinkson; Respiratory Therapist

*Evangeline Abodenas

*Heidi Lott, Jessica Baxley, Stacey Devenney, Pam Taylor; Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation

*Marlene Andrews; Trillium Employment Services

*Teachers Rachel Smith-Mosel and Lisa Howard and students First Creek Middle School

*James Williams; Treehouse for Kids

*Bryan Nelson

*Dave Messick; Great Northern Beverage

*Dr. Larry Hansen, Dr. Asa Hansen, Dr. Mike Kinnear, Dr. Lawrence Ball, Dr. Diane M. Sherwood-Palmer, Dr. C. Randy Baze; Chiropractors

*Ken Irish

*Teresa Sawyer, Kathy Keek, Rosa Diaz, Miriam Acalco, Audrey Allison-Jones, Miriam Tapia, Cirel Hoover, Ashia Tolbert, Kristina Pierce, Tafta Jones; Early Learning advocates

*Abditahmau Hashu, Asseta Goban, Engdu Ayechese, Anija Ahi, Fedurno Omer, Yurub Omer, Zahra Nor

